MAY, 1878.

The Augsburg Sunday School Teacher

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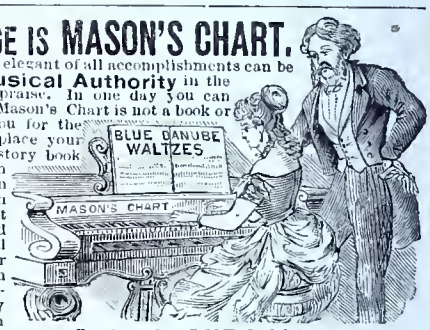

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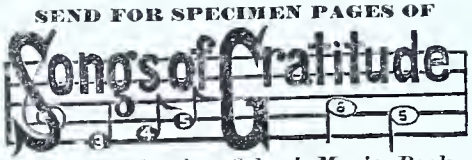

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THE

AUGSBURG SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER.

VOL. IV. PHILADELPHIA, MAY, 1878. No. 5.

REV. F. W. CONRAD, D.D., EDITOR. PROF. H. L. BAUGHER, MANAGING EDITOR.

A DOORKEEPER.

BY REV. JOEL SWARTZ, D. D.

In the few minutes that are left me before going to the funeral of a pious sexton who served the church in which I am pastor, for thirty-eight years, I desire to invite the attention of your reader to some thoughts suggested by such an event.

1. *His office was a very humble one.* When the Psalmist said "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," he no doubt intended, whatever may have been the duties of that office, to contrast the blessings of the humblest position in the church with the disadvantages and dangers of the highest place in the gift of the wicked away from it. The sexton of whom I speak, though only a waiter at the door and a performer of menial work about the house of God, had opportunity to hear enough of the gospel to make him a fairly intelligent Christian and to participate in the worship of God, in which he had learned to take delight. And when only lately released from his services to take his place as a great sufferer on his bed, he endured his affliction as only a Christian can, and died in the faith of the gospel. From the place of a doorkeeper he has been promoted to the dignity of a king and a priest in the temple of our God.

No place is so lowly in the kingdom of God on earth but it may afford an opportunity of obtaining honors in the world to come infinitely outvying the highest ranks and dignities among men.

2. *He magnified his office by fidelity.* For thirty-eight long years Henry Walter was at his post in the church, making fires, sweeping, dusting, lighting, and ringing the bells, all as conscientiously and punctually as the preachers whom he saw coming and going —changing their pastorates while his office unchanged went on—could be in the preparation and delivery of their sermons. Among all other changes, he seemed almost the only fixed institution. And now that his place is at last vacant, it seems as if a pillar had been removed from the church. Is it too much to say of a doorkeeper, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name." Rev. iii. 12.

May he not, then, take rank with the very ministers who enjoyed the high honor of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ from the pulpit? If it be true that "he which is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much," may it not appear that one so long and conscientiously faithful in his lowly office may be honored among the very chief of God's servants? If God does not so much reward his own gifts as our fidelity in the use of them, may it not be that those who embrace duty where there is so little to bribe one's motives and yet so much to try one's patience as is found in the position of

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a doorkeeper, may be found especially worthy of the commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant?"

3. *He was honored and finally revered in his old age by the Christian community* though only a doorkeeper in the house of God. One who could hold a place of some trust and responsibility to the general satisfaction of as many as he sought to please and oblige, during his long term of service, must have had some sterling points about him. How many members became offended and left, in the meantime, because their whims were not gratified, because somebody did or did not speak to them, because they were not made officers in the church or in the Sunday-school, or some other thing was or was not done which they did not like, is not known. But one thing is certain, the sexton held on and served on, despite a thousand instructions, directions, criticisms and discouragements from every one who thought he knew how to have the sexton do better. Well, the sexton heard all complaints patiently and good naturedly, and took as much advice as he thought fit and wise, and went on about his work.

If pastors, superintendents and teachers, will "hold on, hold in, and hold out," as did the patient, cheerful old sexton, doing their work well for conscience's and for Christ's sake, they will find themselves able to outlive all unreasonable criticism and complaint, and at last receive, as Henry Walter has, the "Well done" of God and men.

LIMITS.

BY REV. CHAS. S. ALBERT, A. M.

There are limits which every prudent man observes in his work. "I do not often hear from your lips discourses on strange and puzzling subjects," a parishioner said to his minister. "I never drag into the pulpit," was the ready reply, "subjects upon which I am ignorant, for I do not help my people any by such a course, but harm them." He knew his limits. I sat at one time under a teacher, exceedingly learned in physics. As the college was poor, to his duty as professor of physics was added chemistry, geology, etc. "Gentlemen," he remarked to us when we studied geology, "I can take you through the text-book, but, I make no pretensions to teach the science. My domain is physics." He knew his limits. Both these men were stronger and more useful, because they taught faithfully what they knew, and let alone the things they had not mastered.

We ought to discover our limits as teachers. We are not professors of theology, but Christians of average knowledge. We ought not to attempt that which we have not mastered. It is true that we often know truths we can never fully explain to others. They are lived and known, not expressed. Faith, probably is never conveyed in words to another; nevertheless, we understand it, and therefore, as far as is possible, can lead another. Religion may be taught by a pious Christian, who will shun many theological problems which he has not clearly comprehended. We would not decry knowledge. All strong faith builds upon knowledge. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" It demands certain ground-truths to be understood before it can take place in the soul.

Many difficulties, though, that are connected with the Christian religion are upon the intellectual and not upon the practical, living side. The saving truths may be taught by any ordinary Christian, the intellectual problems arising out of the Bible having little to do with them. These limits ought to be known and observed.

We undertake sometimes the explanation of hard sayings, perplexing questions, and the end is to create doubts and throw no light on the de-

bated point. The English minister is a brilliant example. In his reading, he had examined Strauss; he flew to arms; he zealously refuted Strauss to his country congregation. They had never heard of him. But, the arguments of their pastor taught them all of his doubts and unbelief, without a satisfactory answer; and the result was, that a very large number became unbelievers. He knew not his limits.

We often have the well-known and straight paths of Christian truth, "the simplicity that is in Christ," to do battle with vagaries, subtleties and sophistries of the day, of which we are largely ignorant and with which we are unable to cope, and do far more mischief than good.

The Convention will soon be in session at Atlanta. They will determine upon a new series of Sunday-school Lessons. Have we not floundered around sufficiently in the difficult parts of the Old Testament? Would it not be well to return to the plainer essential truths of Christianity? There might be a series of lessons selected which would set forth in their proper order the different parts of the plan of salvation, that might be made intensely interesting and profitable. A study of Sin, God's Grace, the Work and Person of Christ, the Holy Spirit, Repentance, Conversion, Justification, the Church, the Word, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Believer's Work, the Consummation of all things, ought to be instructive and interesting to every teacher and child. It may be urged, it is the work of the theologian. I reply, ought not every intelligent Christian to understand these truths? And how can there be satisfaction without this knowledge to the believer?

It would fairly astonish us to know the amount of misapprehension upon these ground-truths of our religion. The doctrine of the Holy Ghost is in many minds very vague. "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." The disciples at Ephesus could find many like them to-day in the Christian Church. The relation of the Word to the Spirit, the necessity and worth of the Church to the believer, the significance of Baptism, the grace in the Lord's Supper, all these could be brought out systematically; and, varying the teaching according to the age of the scholars, could be made instructive to all. The lisping children often ask, what does baptism mean and why do you go to the altar?

We have been carried through many of the most difficult parts of the Old Testament, where indeed there were many plain truths; but they were so intermixed with others which, to make them interesting, required much learning, research and critical judgment, "I wish," said a veteran Sunday-school worker, "we were out of these dry Chronicles." And we do not take into the account that we were forced to discuss the doubts of unbelievers connected with these lessons. Would it not be well to study the whole structure of salvation from the foundation to the cap-stone? Would it not be as beneficial as the studies in the Old Testament which have occupied so much of our time? "Knowledge is power." Knowledge of these saving truths would give us more power in the church.

SUMMER SUNDAY-SCHOOLS. — There are a goodly number of Sunday-schools in the rural districts, which on account of distance, roads and weather, are compelled to close their schools during the winter. The time for the re-opening of such Sunday-schools is near at hand.

We therefore call the attention of pastors, superintendents and teachers to the AUGSBURG TEACHER, as one of the best and cheapest helpers now offered to those engaged in the work of teaching in our Sunday-schools. The *Augsburg Lessons*, *Primary* and *Infant Leaves*, and to which the TEACHER is adapted, are characterized by the same excellences, and have given general satisfaction. The TEACHER with its associated leaves, together with the *Lutheran Sunday-school Herald*, have received a wide circulation and been received with general favor.

SILENCE never betrayed any one.

ATLANTA.

HAVE WE, AS A CHURCH, ANY INTEREST IN THE COMING SUNDAY-SCHOOL GATHERING?

BY REV. S. B. BARNITZ.

The "International Sunday-school Convention," appointed for Atlanta, Georgia, for the 17th, 18th and 19th of April, will be a gathering of more than ordinary importance to the great interests of Bible study and Christian work among the children of our land. Have we, as a denomination, any interest in that great assembly? "*Much, every way.*" Martin Luther may justly be called the founder of Bible or Sunday-schools; for he it was who, immediately after the Reformation, gave command to the pastors throughout Germany to gather together the children, "the little ones," to study and receive instruction in the Word of God. He it was who among his first works prepared that choice summary of Bible doctrine—the Smaller Catechism—that the children might be taught in the things pertaining to godliness. Following his example, John Frederic Oberlin established infant schools and Sunday-schools, his wife being superintendent of the former, and he himself of the latter, in the *Ban de la Roche*, one of the most spiritually destitute parts of all Europe. The teachings of these men of God have left their impress upon the children of the Reformation in all the years that have intervened, and at this day, more than ever in the past, the Bible is being thoroughly taught the youth of all lands. The principal and most important work of the Atlanta Convention will be *to promote the study of the Bible*, and surely we should deem it a privilege to be of the number of those who set on foot measures for the accomplishment of so important a work.

On this point we find our own thoughts so well expressed by the editor of the *Sunday-school Times* that we quote a portion of his excellent editorial on the "*Atlanta Programme:*"

"A debate of a few hours at Indianapolis, in 1872, secured the plan of a common series of Bible lessons for the Christian world. The movement thus initiated has up to this time resulted in an amount of systematic and thorough study of the entire Scriptures never before known or dreamed of. Its impress is already on the entire generation. It has influenced the style and substance of preaching in the pulpits of America a hundred times as much as all the importation of clergymen from abroad has done. It has affected the publishing interests of this country beyond any other single cause during this decade. Works of biblical research, of critical and popular Bible commentary, of illustration and of devotion, have been justified in editions hitherto unprecedented. The periodical literature growing out of this movement is so extensive that a prophecy of its present aggregate circulation would have been deemed the wildest fancy, six years ago. Ministers of wellnigh every name, and their people with them, seem to be now "all with one accord in one place" in Bible study. The very atmosphere of Christendom is affected by the combined and hearty study of a common series of Scripture facts and lessons; and both the knowledge and the love of God's Word are more widely prevalent and have a firmer hold to-day in all the Church of Christ, than at any former time since the Pentecostal gathering. An organization which has such possibilities dependent on its action is worth watching. At the approaching Atlanta Convention the question of a new plan of uniform Bible lessons, to follow the seven years' course now drawing to a close, will be up for discussion, and will doubtless be finally decided. This gives an added interest to whatever is likely to influence its conclusions."

The action of the Indianapolis Convention in 1872, was the foundation of the "*Augsburg Series of Bible Lessons*" in the Lutheran Church, adopted at

Bucyrus, O., confirmed at Johnstown, Pa., and Wooster, O., and reaching a circulation and exerting an influence which even the most earnest advocates of Lesson-Leaves and Teacher did not expect. As a denomination we are, or should be, deeply interested in the course of lessons for the next seven years. Our history as a Church, as the very leader in bringing children and youth under religious instruction—the success reached and good accomplished by the use of the "*Uniform Lessons*," our desire to improve that system, our interest in united effort to build up Christ's kingdom, and above and beyond all, our love for him who commanded "*Feed my lambs*," and who said: "*Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish*," say unto us: "BE INTERESTED IN THE ATLANTA CONVENTION!" Already a number of ministers and laymen of the Evangelical Lutheran Church have been appointed regular delegates to the great gathering, and our Publication Board has taken steps to have its publications represented in the Convention Museum or Bazaar. The Lutheran brethren of the South will give us a warm and cordial greeting, and all these things combine to show that we have a great interest in the coming gathering of Sunday-school workers.

Now brethren, let us (D. V.) go to Atlanta. Let us greet each other and our brethren of the South, in the name of our common Master, and in that great convocation take the place which God has given us as *his* children, and heirs to the principle of Bible study as handed down to us from the great Reformer, whose name our Church bears.

The Augsburg Oracle.

OUR QUESTION BOX.

BY ROBT. B. KINSELL, WASHINGTON, D. C.

(THE QUESTION BOX invites short, practical contributions from all who love the Lord and His work in the Sunday-school. *Bear in mind, dear friends, that we have space only for matter relating to Sunday-school work.* Send to the above address.)

Q. "Is it important to have children commit portions of each lesson to memory?"

A. Yes. Urge them to do so, yourself setting the example. Help them to the *sense* of the Scripture, not the words only. In teaching encourage your children to make their answers in their own words and own way; lead them however to commit to memory, and apply in answering, texts of Scripture in the words of Scripture.

Q. "Should not scholars be urged to do missionary work—to bring other children into the Sunday-school?"

A. Yes; but do not have them coax children away from other schools to attend yours. District your town, or village, or section of city. Find those among your people who can and will do visiting work. Get them at it. When children are found who do not attend any Sunday school, gather *them* in; and through them you may catch their parents also. All such are a real gain. This is not advancing your school at the cost of some other, but is genuine growth.

Q. A teacher in a page of long words complains that his scholars don't, can't, or won't understand his teaching: that he doesn't know whether it is, as he puts it, "because of the natural perversity of the unregenerated intellectual," etc., or that "they have not the ability to comprehend ratiocination by reason of their juvenility," etc.

A. We would think so. Why, dear brother, such kind of stuff as you send is an unknown tongue to children, and to many grown people too, we hope. Get off your stilts. Can't you hit your thought with little words? The use of big-sounding words does not indicate learning, but a kind of windy shallowness which it would be well for teachers to avoid. Be simple and plain, that you may be understood and may teach something. A teacher of children who uses big words when little ones will carry his meaning as well, is—we can't think just at this moment what he is, but he is *not* wise.

Q. Among other things in his letter, a teacher says: "I think children should not be pressed to come to the Saviour. I believe in waiting for the leading of the Spirit. I tell my scholars, as our pastor told the school last Sunday, that if any of them wish to speak to me on the subject of religion I am willing to speak with them, but that it is a solemn step, not to be taken without careful deliberation."

A. It seems to us that this line of thought is likely to lead you into the mistake that you are free from all responsibility in the matter. Why are you a teacher? Is it not that you *may* speak to the children under your care on the subject of religion instead of waiting for them first to come to you? Is there not too much "*waiting* for the Spirit?" What do we who are engaged in the Lord's work mean by "waiting for the Spirit?" Are we not taught that our Heavenly Father is more willing to give this great Gift than we are to receive? If we go forward, *we have the Spirit.* Children should be led to inquire after the Lord, and the time is "NOW."

Q. "I do not seem to get any appreciation of my work from Pastor or Superintendent."

A. Well, do you teach for that? Ought not teachers to think much of their scholars and their work, most of the Lord, and little of themselves? You do not work to be praised of men.

Q. "Should not children be praised when they have done well?"

A. A word of commendation when it does not minister to pride is good. A "well done" now and then, when it can be truthfully spoken, will cheer on your scholars. On the other hand, don't find too much fault, don't scold, don't discourage the children.

Q. "How long and what should be the opening exercises of the school?"

A. This is a matter for your own good judgment. We have no rules Our own school session is an hour and a quarter. We think that long enough. Opening exercises about fifteen minutes, singing, responsive Scripture reading bearing on the lesson, singing, creed, a short prayer, and the Lord's prayer, singing, and then teaching a half hour; School reassembles, singing, a blackboard exercise, or short review and application of the lesson from the desk, sometimes a prayer, then a hymn or two, etc. We vary this order. Variety brightens and freshens and interests the children. Whatever you may introduce we would suggest that all be done with a purpose, that the exercises have one aim—the opening exercises leading to the lesson, and the closing, seeking to impress and apply it; that you select hymns and Scripture before coming to the school, and diligently and prayerfully prepare all things, and that there be no scattering.

Q. "How do some Pastors and Superintendents keep their people from giving money to the cause of the Lord?"

A. We do not know. Perhaps it is by presenting the Lord to them as a beggar needing a little of their charity. We will keep thinking on this question and try to say something next time, meanwhile asking from pastors and superintendents helpful answers.

Q. One question more: "While our pastor was speaking to the school on the lesson last Sunday, I saw several conversations going on between teachers. Also, three teachers talking to their classes, and other teachers, while themselves attentive, permitting talking and laughing among their scholars, without reproof or notice. Ought this not to be corrected?"

A. Certainly. Teachers ought at all times to be helpers not hinderers in the good order, behavior, and attention of their scholars, and the proper conduct of the school, by example, reproof and *watchfulness.* Stir them up on this matter in your teachers' meetings.

—And now, dear fellow-workers, a brief common-sense word on our own account. The Sunday-school much needs earnest, intelligent, *trained* workers. We teachers ought ourselves to be so fixed and grounded in the Truth, and so skilled in teaching it, that we do not slip *nor lead others to slip.* We need more study of the Word—thorough study. We need right thinking, efficient plans in our working for God, wise doing. We need to be trained, *head* as well as heart. For the battle to-day, every one enlisted needs to be a trained soldier—no longer than is absolutely necessary a member of "the awkward squad." Wherever is an "awkward squad," there is a weak spot in the army. Let us think of these things.

Lessons for May.

COMMENTS BY PROF. H. L. BAUGHER, M. A. BLACKBOARD ILLUSTRATIONS BY REV. J. CROLL BAUM, A. M.

THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

May 5. Jeremiah lii. 1-11.

Explanation.—David the first king of Judah founded his reign and his dynasty upon God's law (represented in design by crown marked *David* resting upon tables of stone inscribed *God's Law*). The *Promise* was that if his successors should continue to follow God as he did—his *Line* should be established. The reigns that fulfilled these conditions came in the *Line of Promise* (see design) and are marked in the Bible as "good reigns." But the Line of Promise did not prevail because the great mass of David's successors did not follow in David's footsteps. These in the design are marked the "*Line of Punishment.*" *By Disobedience* in breaking God's Law (represented in design by broken tables of stone) and rejection of the Lord in setting up *Idolatry* (represented in design by altar inscribed "*Strange Gods,*") they brought down the Punishment of God upon the Dynasty of David and the people of Judah in the *Captivity*. The number of reigns which were like David's—right in the sight of God—were far overbalanced by the number of which the Bible says, "and he did that which was *Evil* in the sight of the Lord." In the design, therefore, the cause of the *Punishment* of the captivity of David's Dynasty and nation is indicated by the inscription EVIL marked over the disobedient and idolatrous reigns.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON.

In 2 Kings xxiv. and xxv. and in 2 Chron. xxxvi., as well as in the last chapter of the prophecy of Jeremiah, we have brief accounts of the closing up of the kingdom of Judah by going into captivity, following in the wake of Israel, though nearly a century and a half later. The account in Jeremiah is an appendix to his book, and is very much like that in Kings, much of it being word for word the same. The two accounts appear to have been drawn from some third source. Jeremiah was a prisoner in Jerusalem when the city was taken, but likely he died before some of the events of this chapter occurred. The last four reigns in Judah occupying a little over a score of years, are passed over, in the Scripture narrative, with little mention except to declare their persistently evil course, Josiah's three sons and grandson having yielded to the party of idolatry, and, in a short while, discarded and overthrown their pious ancestor's reforms. The down-hill course ended in the captivity of which our lesson tells. The sins and wretchedness of the period can be learned from the writings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the latter of whom was carried off to Chaldea by Nebuchadnezzar along with Jehoiachin, who was deposed and Zedekiah, his uncle, put in his place. Read Jeremiah xxxii-xlii., the whole of the book of Lamentations, and Ezekiel iv.–xvii., etc., from which the character of the times and of the judgments upon them may be learned.

Given Over to Sin.

Verse 1. ZEDEKIAH was the twentieth ruler of Judah. He was Josiah's son, uncle of his predecessor Jehoiachin, and brother of Jehoiakim and Jehoahaz. See 2 Chron. xxxvi. and 2 Kings xxiv. HAMUTAL was his mother's name: she

was also Jehoahaz's mother; but Jehoiakim was son of another wife. JEREMIAH was a rather common name. We know nothing further of this man.

Verse 2. HE DID EVIL IN THE EYES OF THE LORD. He is the twelfth king of Israel of whom this is said, Rehoboam, Abijah, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Jehoiachin bearing him company as evil doers. Their reigns together comprise a period of 130 years. Of the remaining rulers Joash and Amaziah's reigns were of a mixed character, they ruled 69 years. Of the remainder, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah and Josiah, it is said they "did right in the sight of the Lord," although not without faults, sometimes very great. These good reigns aggregate 194 years. From his immediate predecessors as well as from the whole history of Israel's kings, Zedekiah might have learned how bitter and evil a thing it is to depart from the right ways of the Lord; but, withal, he chose the evil.

Verse 3. FOR THROUGH THE ANGER OF THE LORD IT CAME TO PASS.

"The hidden boundary between God's patience and his wrath" had been crossed. JERUSALEM AND JUDAH, with their king, were given over to sin and wrath. Long had God waited on them; O how patient he had been; but as, before the flood, he said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man," and a hundred and twenty years were given him before destruction should come, so now Israel's days were numbered. For man to be merely left to himself without God's restraining grace, is a judgment of destruction. Zedekiah had sufficient warning. God spake to him by Jeremiah, but he refused to humble himself and obey. Man's obstinacy often effects God's purpose. The more good influences a man resists the harder becomes his heart, till it is past feeling. Thus of the same person it is sometimes said in Scripture that he hardens his own heart and that God hardens it. This judicial hardening is the beginning of everlasting destruction. TILL HE HAD CAST THEM OUT FROM HIS PRESENCE, from his favor and particular care He had chosen them; then they rejected him, and then he cast them off. Nearly four hundred years, however, had he waited, since the kingdom was divided. Israel, in which there was no good king, went into captivity 135 years before Judah. ZEDEKIAH REBELLED AGAINST THE KING OF BABYLON, who had put him on the throne in place of Jehoiachin, and to whom he had sworn by a most solemn oath to be faithful. The violation of this oath was especially hateful to a covenant-keeping God. See Ezekiel xvii. 11–21. It will be remembered that Pharaoh-Necho, whom Josiah went to meet and encountered at Megiddo, where the latter met his death, conquered Judah and made her tributary. But, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar repulsed the king of Egypt, and in turn made Judah tributary to Babylon, carrying off many captives. About three years afterwards Judah rebelled, but was again subjected, more captives carried off, and Zedekiah put on the throne. Now in turn Zedekiah rebelled, and contrary to Jeremiah's advice, resisted the vast power of the Chaldees. He counted on the support of Pharaoh-Hophra, now king of Egypt.

Given Over to Captivity.

Verses 4-6 IN THE NINTH YEAR of Zedekiah's reign, viz.: B C. 587, or thereabouts; IN THE TENTH MONTH, corresponding to our January, IN THE TENTH DAY OF THE MONTH. Stanley says this day has been commemorated by the Jews ever since, kept as a fast. See, in Ezek. xxiv. 1, the revelation made that very day to the captive prophet concerning the fate of Jerusalem. NEBUCADNEZZAR. This is one way of spelling his name. He was the second king of the lower, or Chaldean empire, of which BABYLON was the capital. He was a mighty man, noted for his military successes and for the strength and grandeur to which he brought his capital and kingdom. His father had revolted against Assyria and established the Babylonian empire. HE AND ALL HIS ARMY. There was a very large force, as is indicated in Jer. xxxiv. 1. From what follows it appears that the king's headquarters were at Riblah, very far north of Jerusalem. He was conduct-

ing a siege against Tyre at the same time, and was engaged in subduing the whole country. JERUSALEM was the main point in Judea, and was the most strongly fortified. PITCHED AGAINST IT. Laid siege to it. BUILT FORTS, or towers, perhaps for battering rams and perhaps for the purpose of throwing missiles over the walls. Such towers are seen in the Assyrian sculptures. The siege lasted till the NINTH DAY OF THE FOURTH MONTH OF THE ELEVENTH YEAR of Zedekiah, eighteen months in all. This shows the strength of the position the city occupied. THE FAMINE WAS SORE. For the intensity of it as had been predicted, see Jer. xxi. 7–9; xxxii. 24; xxxviii. 9; Lam. ii. 20; iv. 3–10, v. 4; Ezek. iv. 16; v. 12, 16.

Verse 7. BROKEN UP. A breach was made in the walls, allowing the enemy to enter. This was on the north side, in what is called the lower city, as we gather from Jer. xxxix. 3. FLED. The weakness of famine was probably enhanced by the weakness of panic. BY NIGHT. So Ezekiel had said (Chap. xii. 12) it would be. BETWEEN THE TWO WALLS of Mt. Moriah on one side and Mt. Zion on the other; so that they got out of the city by the valley called Tyropoieon, whose exit was toward the southeast. BY THE KING'S GARDEN. Making a hasty departure from the palace. AND THEY WENT BY THE WAY OF THE PLAIN through which the Jordan flowed, across which, likely, they aimed to go.

Verse 8. BUT THE ARMY OF THE CHALDEANS, distributed around the city, got wind of the attempted escape, and PURSUED, AND OVERTOOK ZEDEKIAH IN THE PLAINS OF JERICHO, some hours distant from Jerusalem.

Verse 9. THE KING OF BABYLON had his headquarters at RIBLAH, IN THE LAND OF HAMATH, 250 miles distant in the north, whence he could better command the movements of different parts of his army, and be in easier communication with all quarters. Hither the royal captive was taken for JUDGMENT. Revolt and violation of the most solemn oath were chargeable against him.

Verses 10 and 11. When it is said THE KING OF BABYLON did the things here narrated, we need not suppose he did them with his own hand; the language would be justified even if he only ordered the things done. SLEW THE SONS OF ZEDEKIAH BEFORE HIS EYES. A cruel prelude to his own fate. Many of the customs of those days and countries seem to our more civilized and merciful age most savagely cruel. THE PRINCES, or chief men OF JUDAH met a similar end, whilst the chief captive has his EYES PUT OUT, a customary mode of punishment, still used in Persia, and BOUND IN CHAINS, probably hand and foot, since "two chains" are referred to, he is CARRIED TO BABYLON. Thus was fulfilled the paradoxical prophecy of Ezekiel (xii. 13), that he should go to Babylon yet not see it, though he should die there. PUT HIM IN PRISON TILL THE DAY OF HIS DEATH. Compare Jer. xxxiv. 2–5. We are reminded of Samson's treatment by the Philistines.

A month after the taking of Jerusalem it was destroyed by fire under the direction of Nebuchadnezzar's captain of the guard, and the walls were demolished, and spoils and additional captives carried off to Babylon. This was the third or fourth time that Nebuchadnezzar had taken Jerusalem, and now he made a full end of it. True, Gedaliah, son of Jeremiah's friend Ahikam, was made governor of what little remained of the Jewish capital, but in two months he was assassinated, whereupon the remaining Jews went down to Egypt for protection and carried Jeremiah thither with them, where tradition says, they afterwards stoned him to death. The carrying off of captives was a feature of more than one of the king of Babylon's hostile visits to Jerusalem, so that at the last there were comparatively few left to be carried away.

In all this the words of Moses spoken nine hundred years before, as well as the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, prophets contemporary with the events, were fulfilled. Israel was removed out of his land for his sins and persistent rebellion against God. Jeremiah declared that this captivity would continue seventy years.

Reflections.

1. What a commentary on human nature, that, even while under special divine instruction and care, it pursues such courses and comes to such an end! If God's chosen people show such a history, what shall be said of people left entirely to their own ways? All history, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, sustains the Bible doctrine of the exceeding depravity of man's nature.

2. The history of Israel and Judah sets forth both God's patience and his wrath.

3. The term "captivity," early had attached to it a metaphorical, spiritual meaning, having reference to evil in and by which men are taken as a prey. Thus it is said, "The Lord turned the captivity of Job," when he delivered him out of his distresses. So our Lord is said to have "led captivity captive." Satan is the great captor of men, holding them in chains of sin and fear; but our Lord has broken these chains, taken away the fear of death, burst the bands of the grave, and liberated all who put their trust in him.

THE CAPTIVES IN BABYLON.

May 12. Daniel 1. 8-17.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON.

"The captivity of Judah," the consummation of which we had in our last lesson, is reckoned by some to commence with Nebuchadnezzar's first taking of Jerusalem and carrying off of certain of the inhabitants thereof, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, which was about twenty years before the events recited in our last lesson. It will be remembered that Josiah was killed in attempting to dispute Pharaoh-Necho's passage through Palestine on his way to attack Assyria. On his return from that expedition, the victorious king of Egypt carried off to his own country Jehoahaz, whom the people had made king of Judah in place of Josiah, and appointed that one's brother Eliakim king of Judah and Jerusalem, changing his name to Jehoiakim, and putting him under heavy tribute. In the third and fourth year of Jehoiakim, however, Nebuchadnezzar, second king of Babylon, defeated this same Pharaoh-Necho, and took from him the conquests he had made in the beforementioned expedition; and coming to Jerusalem, took it and made it a dependency of Babylon. This was about the year 606 B. C. At this time occurred the first deportation of captives, among whom were Daniel and his comrades. The difference in the dates given by Jeremiah (xxv. 1) and Daniel (i. 1) is thus referred to by Smith: "The simplest explanation is that the advance of Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon began in the third year of Jehoiakim, but that Jerusalem was not taken till the fourth." Among the captives were some "of the king's seed, and of the princes," according to Jeremiah's prophecy to Hezekiah (2 Kings xx. 17, 18), and according to Oriental custom, these were inquired for to be attendants and courtiers in the king of Babylon's palace. Besides being of high descent, they were to be noble in form and comely in countenance, and bright in mental faculties, promising youths in every respect, and they were to pass through a three years' course of education in the learning and language of the Chaldeans, and then after due examination and approval, be installed as members of the royal court. All this time provision for their daily sustenance was made from the king's table. Kitto notes it as interesting that an almost exact parallel to the practices narrated in this chapter was but lately still existent in the Ottoman court. He says: "The time is still within living memory when the pages of the seraglio, the officers of the court, as well as the greater part of the high functionaries of state and governors of provinces, were originally boys of Christian parentage, who had been taken captive in war, or bought or stolen in time of peace." Among those selected on this occasion by the king's officer were Daniel and his three friends.

Verse 8. DANIEL. Of his pedigree we have no certain knowledge. Josephus says he and the three with whom his name is associated were "of the family of Zedekiah"; the Jews represent him as of the royal family, descended from Hezekiah, and cite his history as a fulfillment of Is. xxxix. 7. There is a gen-

eral agreement that he was quite a youth when he was carried to Babylon, opinions of his age ranging from twelve to eighteen years. His name signifies JUDGE OF GOD, that is, one who acts as judge in the name of God. According to a common custom, a new name was given to him when he entered this new relation. He was called "Belteshazzar," which means *prince of Bel*, which latter was the chief god of Babylon. Similarly Mohammedan names are given to the captive youths of the Turkish court. Likewise in our mission schools among the heathen Christian names are given to the young people in place of their heathen names. PURPOSED IN HIS HEART. The determination here related shows sterling character and strength of will, especially for one so young. Although we have no knowledge of his previous training, it is inferred from this that he had been brought up religiously. Looking at the whole history, we must conclude that from very early years he had been under the special moulding of God's Providence and Spirit, fitting him for the great service he was to render to the cause of truth. Like Paul, he was "a chosen vessel." THAT HE WOULD NOT DEFILE HIMSELF WITH THE PORTION OF THE KING'S MEAT, NOR WITH THE WINE WHICH HE DRANK. In what sense could he regard food and drink from the royal commissariat a defilement? Let it be remembered that much of the ceremonial law consisted in regulations about eating and drinking. There were restrictions as to *what* they should eat. Nebuchadnezzar's table might offer food forbidden to the Jews. Again, the law was particular as to *how* the flesh of animals was prepared. The Chaldeans doubtless were not so particular about eating all flesh *without the blood* as the Jews were. Then again these heathen were accustomed to offer food and drink offerings to their idols, and Daniel may have felt that by partaking of food and drink that had been thus offered, he would become a partner in the idolatry. The same subject in later days troubled the Corinthian Christians, as we read in 1 Cor. viii. and x. Now when we consider that these lads were in the midst of a luxurious city, chosen out to become the king's retainers, and supplied with the dainties of a royal table, it is evidence of no little virtue that they made and adhered to the decision here recorded. How many would have excused themselves by the circumstances, and readily have yielded to the *compulsion* of their captors! Fear of the taunts of others who would come to know their determination would, doubtless, also have deterred some from so conscientious a course. Here was a moral courage that challenges our highest admiration, and affords an example worthy of imitation. THE PRINCE OF THE EUNUCHS, the head chamberlain of the palace. Eunuchs were employed in Oriental courts to a large extent, and they often attained high position, not only in royal favor, but also in office. Ashpenaz was the chief of this class of officers at Nebuchadnezzar's court, and of him Daniel courteously and earnestly REQUESTED that he might be allowed to carry out that purpose of his heart which we have considered. We suppose it was a hard request either to make or to grant, and was liable to be misunderstood and to bring the offerer of it into disfavor; it was like disdaining hospitality.

Verse 9. NOW GOD HAD BROUGHT DANIEL INTO FAVOR AND TENDER LOVE WITH this officer. So "the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison." These cases illustrate the Scripture that "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." See Ps. cvi. 46, and compare 1 Kings viii. 50. Everything in the history leads us to believe that the youth was lovable; but there was a special providence in his being so esteemed by one so influential. God foresees the trials into which his people will fall, and prepares the way to bear them or get out of them, for those who put their trust in him and seek to please him.

Verse 10. I FEAR MY LORD, THE KING. There was a third party to be considered, and he had despotic power. Ashpenaz was but an executive, who had his orders. It was the king's appointment which Daniel asked to be relieved

from. WHY SHOULD HE SEE YOUR FACES WORSE LIKING—in worse condition, paler, more thin and cadaverous—than THE CHILDREN—youths—OF YOUR SORT, age or term of your class? He takes it for granted, or at least fears, that such would be the result at the end of the disciplinary period. This would be inquired into, and the consequence would be I would ENDANGER MY HEAD; my life would be imperiled for disobedience to orders. A subject's head was not worth much against the wrath of an Oriental despot. It was the result which Ashpenaz feared; if he could be assured of no ill effect on his charge, he would have no objections to granting the petition of one so dear to him as Daniel.

Verses 11–13. Seeing this, the young Hebrew proposed to the steward, MELZAR, WHOM THE PRINCE OF THE EUNUCHS HAD SET OVER him and his three companions, to test the matter. PROVE THY SERVANTS. Give us a trial. TEN DAYS will show whether ill-effects will come from the regimen we propose, and little will be risked in that short time. PULSE TO EAT. Pulse was of the nature of peas, beans, and like seeds. Gesenius explains it as "vegetables, herbs, opposed to flesh and more delicate food." Porridge was made of pulse. WATER TO DRINK. The common beverage God has made for man, the healthiest and the best. The word rendered CHILDREN in verse 10, as also in verses 4, 6, and 17, is applied to young people of various ages, even up to those old enough to be counsellors, as in 1 Kings xii. 8.

It is noticeable that whilst the Hebrew names of these lads in each instance contained the name of the true God, the Chaldean names given them embody the names of heathen gods—Bel, Sheshach, and Nego. The whole effort of the captors was to thoroughly naturalize these youths in heathenish ways—an attempt resisted by the prudent Daniel at the outset.

Verse 13 THEN, after the ten days, let an investigation be made. Compare OUR COUNTENANCES with those of THE CHILDREN THAT EAT OF THE PORTION OF THE KING'S MEAT. Whether these were less scrupulous Hebrews or some other captives does not appear. AND AS THOU SEEST, DEAL WITH THY SERVANTS. Be guided by the result. Daniel had no misgivings as to what the result would be. His faith was equal to his purp ose

Verses 14 and 15. The steward CONSENTED God favored his servant's purpose, and opened the way for its execution. There is no need for us to ask, "What if he hadn't consented?" The close of the ten days showed THEIR COUNTENANCES FAIRER AND FATTER than those of their fellows. As a matter of dietetics we know that simple nutritious food and drink are more healthful and produce a clearer complexion and better general condition than luxurious diet and strong drink. Besides this natural blessing which was in their regimen, we may suppose God's particular blessing on those who, whether they ate or drank, did all to His glory. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

Verses 16 and 17. THUS Daniel's purpose was accomplished. Seeing no evil consequences, but rather benefits, resulted from the desired course, it was allowed to these captive Hebrews. But how did they fare in their studies? GOD GAVE THEM good success in these. Naturally quick and intelligent (see verse 4), KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL were added to them IN ALL LEARNING AND WISDOM. In the Chaldee tongue, for instance, which, though kindred to the Hebrew, was so different from it that it had to be studied by Hebrews to be used and understood. The Chaldeans, moreover, were distinguished in the science of astronomy, the climate and occupations of the people favoring out-door life and opportunities for watching the heavens. Astrology, by which they determined men's destinies was also regarded as a science among them. They devoted themselves also to magic arts and sought to forecast character and events. Doubtless amid much study and learning there was a great deal of superstition and chicanery. Now the knowledge and skill in which these youths at length appeared "ten times better" than all the wise men of Babylon, was true

learning, God's gift imparted, through both natural and special agencies. In Ex. xxxi. 1–6, mechanic arts are ascribed to "the spirit of God," and an Apostle says to some who were disposed to vaunt themselves, "what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" UNDERSTANDING IN ALL VISIONS AND DREAMS was a special gift of Daniel, and it is exemplified in his writings that follow. He both saw visions and dreamed dreams, and was able to interpret them. A similar endowment was bestowed on Joseph in Egypt. Visions differ from dreams in that the former occur to the person in a wakeful condition, and he takes a more conscious part in them than in dreams, which belong to an unconscious sleeping state. This power of Daniel was miraculous, and does not appear to have been shared by his companions.

Reflections.

1. Wisdom is an attribute of God: and "his understanding is infinite." These are objects worthy of our study and search, and are to be sought from God. To exalt ignorance and oppose learning is to exalt folly and dishonor God. Learning is the handmaid of religion.

2. Temperance is favorable to health of body, beauty of countenance and vigor of mind. On the contrary strong drink makes blear eyes, red nose, bloated cheeks and haggard features. "The show of their countenance doth witness against" (Is. iii. 9) those who are addicted to strong drink.

3. Peloubet has the following apt illustration:—It is well known that merchants are rated in certain books, for the use of traders, according to capital, business ability, promptness and the like; and one who searches the books may find even still more about them. A number of years ago a firm of four men in Boston, were rated as A 1, rich, prosperous, young, prompt. One of them had a curiosity to see how they were rated, and found all those points on the book, and was satisfied; but at the end it was written, "*But they all drink.*" He thought it a good joke at the time; but to-day two are dead, another a drunkard, the fourth poor, and living in part on charity. They would far better have "dared to be Daniel."

4. Luxurious diet is not necessary, or best, to produce comeliness and vigor of body or strength of mind; but a plain diet with God's blessing is sufficient.

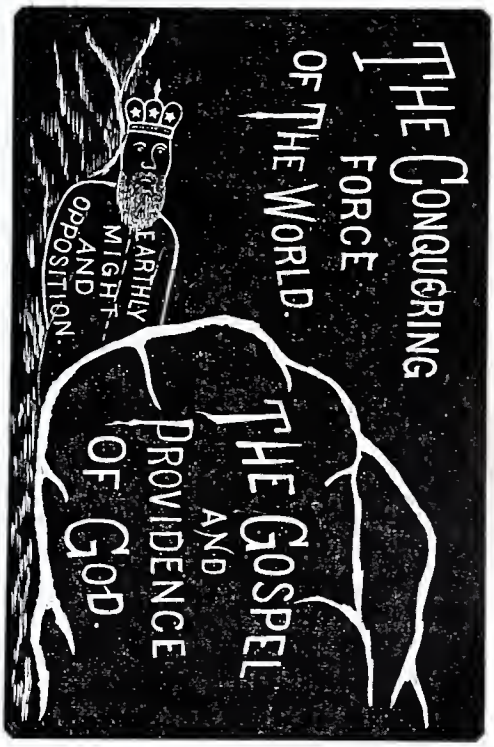
5. Yet it would be false reasoning to argue from this narrative that pulse and water, or a vegetarian diet, are either obligatory on man or specially recognized by God.

6. Young men from home should remember their early godly training, and preserve a clean conscience, no matter at what risks. "When you are in Rome do as the Romans do," is a course admissible only where conscience and moral questions are not involved.

7. "Them that honor me I will honor," saith the Lord.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.

May 19. Daniel ii. 36–45.



Explanation.—The image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream was interpreted by David to signify *earthly* kingdoms and powers. The great stone that crushed it and filled the earth was a kingdom that should not be overthrown, but would become all-powerful. Such a *Conquering Force* (see design) is *the Gospel and Providence of God*, these shall "overcome the world" with all the *might* it has and the *op-*

position it may offer—just as the stone in Nebuchadnezzar's vision crushed the image. Though men worship the image of *earthly might* (see design) the Gospel shall overthrow it and Jesus shall reign in spite of "Principalities and Powers," and "wickedness in high places"—"the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever." The knowledge of God by the Gospel shall cover the earth as waters cover the great deep—just as the stone in the vision filled all the earth—and thus will be verified the saying, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner."

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

"The second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign" of verse 1 calculates from the death of his father, previous to which he was joined with his father for some time in the government of the kingdom. The time of Nebuchadnezzar's dream here related must have been very shortly after the three years' course of training of the four Hebrews spoken of in our last lesson, and their admission to the class of the wise men of the realm. God has infinite resources, and has used divers ways of making communications to mankind. Among these ways is the use of dreams. Instances of this occur in Gen. xx. 3; xxviii. 8; xxxi. 10, 24; xxxvii. 6–11; Judges vii; 1 Kings iii. 5; Matt. i. 20; ii. 12, 13, 19; and similar are the night visions seen by Paul, recorded in Acts xvi. 9; xviii. 9; xxvii. 23. Nebuchadnezzar's dream greatly impressed him, yet in the morning he could not recall it. Then he made the unheard-of demand upon "the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and Chaldeans," that they should tell him both what he dreamed and the interpretation of it. Appalled at this, they represented that such a demand was both unreasonable and unheard-of, and it was impossible for them to do what the king required. Where-upon, yielding to his wrath at their refusal and virtual reproof of him, the king ordered them all to be put to death. In preparing to carry out this order, Daniel and his fellows were sought for as being among the proscribed. Daniel seems not to have known the occasion of this order, or that it had been issued; and expressing surprise at the haste of the proceedings, sought an interview with the king and promised, if time were allowed, to show the interpretation of the dream. This shows great faith in God on Daniel's part; for he was fully aware that no man had the power implied in the king's demand. It looks, too, as though Nebuchadnezzar, remembering the favorable examination Daniel and his fellows had passed shortly before, was more disposed to listen to them than to the professional wise men of his kingdom; was disposed, at least, to give them opportunity to display their ability. Straightway Daniel went to his house, and summoning his three companions, resorted with them to the only source of help under such circumstances. They united in earnest prayer to God, craving his mercy and asking for that knowledge which would be the means of sparing their lives. He who had been their help did not fail them now, but revealed to Daniel, in a night vision, the forgotten dream, and its meaning. First Daniel poured out his soul in thanksgiving to God for his goodness, and then asked to be brought before the king. Once there, he disclaimed any power of himself to unfold the king's matter, but ascribed his knowledge of the matter to the gracious interposition of that "God in heaven" whom he was known to worship. Then the young Hebrew told Nebuchadnezzar the dream that he had dreamt, describing the great image he had seen and its overthrow by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands.

The Kingdoms of This World.

Verse 36. THIS IS THE DREAM. And the king fully recognized Daniel's representation as the very counterpart of what he had seen in his sleep; everything recurred to his mind vividly again. WE WILL TELL. He does not forget or fail to honor his three companions through whose joint intercessions, with his own, the king's secret was revealed to him. THE INTERPRETATION. God had before given him special "understanding in all visions and dreams" (ii. 17). He did not resort to astrology or magic, but to the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, whose supplies flow into the soul through channels of prayer.

Verse 37. THOU, O KING, ART A KING

OF KINGS. This was no flattery; and though "king of kings" was a title not uncommonly assumed by great monarchs in the East, it was literally and exactly true in the case of Nebuchadnezzar. Many that had been independent sovereigns were now ruling tributary to him, among whom was Judah's Jehoiakim. FOR. There is a reason for this eminence, and the pious youth knows it and does not fear to express it. THE GOD OF HEAVEN—of whom he speaks in such a way as not to recognize any other divinity—HATH GIVEN THEE thy possessions and greatness. He speaks for Divine providence in the affairs of men. A KINGDOM greater than any that had preceded it, being the first of those empires called universal. The next verse speaks of its extent. It seems to have reached from the Euphrates valley to Egypt, including supremacy over the latter country. POWER AND STRENGTH AND GLORY. His capital, Babylon, according to the account of Herodotus, was a square, each side of which measured fourteen miles, and a wall of brick and bitumen, 87 feet thick and 350 feet high, surrounded it. In this wall were 100 gates of brass, and on it 250 towers. Its magnificence probably exceeded anything the world has seen. Nebuchadnezzar's palace, the hanging gardens, anciently regarded as one of the wonders of the world, and the temple of Belus, were among its most famous objects of interest. As the king walked on one of the eminences of his palace, from which he could look over the city, the magnificence of it so swelled his heart with pride that he cried out: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty!" Rawlinson says: "Modern research has shown that Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest monarch that Babylon, or perhaps the East generally, ever produced. He must have possessed an enormous command of human labor. Nine-tenths of Babylon, and nineteen-twentieths of all the other ruins that in almost countless profusion cover the land, are composed of brick stamped with his name. His wealth and the magnificence of his court seem to have been on a par with the number and size of his buildings."

Verse 38. WHERESOEVER THE CHILDREN OF MEN DWELL. Spoken in general, and not with any purpose of accurate definition—an exuberance of expression common in the East, and not uncommon among men everywhere. It would not mislead anybody but a professional fault-finder. Todd says: "The empire of Nebuchadnezzar extended from the Caucasus to the desert of Sahara, and from the Caspian Sea to the shores of the Atlantic, embracing almost the entire known world." THOU ART THIS HEAD OF GOLD. The whole empire was impersonated in Nebuchadnezzar, its greatest sovereign, and was represented by the head of the image. Superior to all in magnificence, the most precious and brilliant of the metals was used to set it forth. Moreover sacred and profane history speak of Babylon as "the golden city," "the city abounding in gold," etc. See Is. xiii. 19; xiv. 4; xlvii. 5; Jer. li. 13, 41.

Verse 39. AFTER THEE. That is, after the kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar reigned forty-three years. SHALL ARISE ANOTHER KINGDOM. This occurred in the reign of his grandson Belshazzar, the Medo-Persian empire at that time succeeding the Babylonian. Cyrus the Great united the Median and Persian kingdoms in one empire, which occupied about the same territory as the Babylonian empire had, but withal was INFERIOR to it in magnificence, as silver is inferior to gold. ANOTHER THIRD KINGDOM was to follow. This prophecy became history when the Macedonian empire of Alexander the Great became mistress of the world. Alexander's conquests embraced more territory than the universal empires that preceded him, and it is said that he wept that there was not another world to conquer. Still, in comparison with its predecessors it is as BRASS to silver and gold. It is noted also by commentators that the Greeks were "brazen-mailed." OVER ALL THE EARTH. See above, on verse 38. Alexander styled himself "the king of the whole world." His provinces were found in Europe, Asia and Africa—all the great divisions of the world then known.

It is noticeable that whilst the Babylonian empire was unique, one whole, and so represented by the head, the following kingdom was composed of two leading peoples, the Medes and Persians, and is so represented by the two breasts and arms. Then again, the Macedonian empire began united, but at its close was parted into two dynasties, the Seleucidae of the north and the Ptolemies of the south, and so it is represented by "the belly and the thighs (two) of brass."

Verse 40. THE FOURTH KINGDOM. This is the only one of the four about which commentators differ. Some understand by it "the empire of Alexander's successors," counting five Seleucidae and five Ptolemies, among whom his kingdom was divided at his death. But these scarcely constituted what may be called a universal empire, and it is better to regard them as the thighs, continuing the Macedonian empire, and to interpret the fourth kingdom as the great Roman Empire, STRONG AS IRON. The iron rule and strength of the Roman power was what distinguished it. To be a "Roman citizen" was a shield of protection and passport the world over. The Roman power extended east to the Tigris, and west to the Atlantic; north as far as Britain, and south to Abyssinia. It was the last and greatest world power, so far as strength is concerned, that history has afforded. AS IRON BREAKETH IN PIECES AND SUBDUETH ALL, so did it BREAK IN PIECES AND BRUISE the constitutions and establishments of all other kingdoms with which it came in contact, reducing them to provinces of the great empire. "It made room for itself," a writer says, "as doth a battering-ram, by continual successive blows; and it ceased not to beat and bruise all nations, so long as they continued to offer any resistance." The Roman power was the great forge-hammer of the nations.

Verses 41-43. These verses describe the divisions and incongruities which should arise in the Roman Empire. IRON IS NOT MIXED WITH CLAY, especially MIRY CLAY. They may adhere by contact, but there can be no union of them. THE STRENGTH OF THE RON is in marked contrast with the weakness of POTTER'S CLAY. How easily a potter's vessel is shivered in pieces! (Ps. ii. 9.) THE SEED OF MEN seems to be the weak part with which THEY, the originally strong power, SHALL MINGLE THEMSELVES. This is not easy to explain. It seems clearly to point to outside influences and alliances which would introduce elements of weakness into the kingdom. Barnes says, "The allusion is, probably, to that intermingling with other nations which so remarkably characterized the Roman Empire, and which arose partly from its conquests, and partly from the inroads of other people in the latter days of the empire, and in reference to both of which there was no proper amalgamation, leaving the original vigor of the Empire substantially in its strength, but introducing other elements which never amalgamated with it, and which were like clay intermingled with iron." The division of the Empire, in the fourth century, into Eastern and Western, and the invasions of the Barbarians and their intermingling with the Romans, are points of history throwing light on these verses.

The Kingdom of God.

Verse 44. IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS. Some time during the prevalence of one or other of these world-powers. The reference to time is general. That the new kingdom fell first on the iron seems to indicate its beginning during the Roman Empire. So we find it. SHALL THE GOD OF HEAVEN SET UP A KINGDOM. Accordingly we find the promised forerunner, preparing the way of the Lord, and crying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." So Jesus preached, and bade the Twelve preach; and continually he was explaining to them the nature of "the kingdom of God" "the kingdom of heaven." He said on oath to Pilate, "Thou sayest that I am a king," at the same time that he explained, "My kingdom is not from hence," is not a world-power, nor in its nature and operations like the world powers. To the Jews he said, "The kingdom of God is taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Jesus testi-

fied to and promised from the beginning of the world, especially in Gen. iii. 15; Ps. ii.; Is. ix. 6, 7, and throughout the Prophets, and by the angels to the shepherds, and by the Magi, and by Simeon and Anna, and by all the events of his history on earth, including the "Palm Sunday" entry into Jerusalem, and by the Holy Spirit of Revelation,—this Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the King of this heavenly kingdom. The Roman Empire was in its glory when Jesus appeared and was lifted up to draw all men unto him. SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," though every world-power has successively been destroyed. NOT BE LEFT TO OTHER PEOPLE. The government shall never change hands, never pass out of the control of its founder. "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of thy dominion there shall be no end." IT SHALL BREAK IN PIECES AND CONSUME ALL THESE KINGDOMS. The God of heaven, who establishes this kingdom, may use physical as well as moral power in accomplishing this end. God makes even the wrath of man to praise him. He is the God of Providence as well as of Grace. Even the wicked are spoken of as his sword. All instrumentalities are under his control, and he will use them for the entire overthrow of the world-powers. The time will come when "great voices in heaven" (Rev. xi. 15) shall announce, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever."

Verse 45. The world-kingdoms are human, represented, therefore, by the image of a man, and so taken and treated as one whole—THE IRON, THE BRASS, THE CLAY, THE SILVER AND THE GOLD, all representing different stages and developments of the one power. To Nebuchadnezzar GOD MADE KNOWN—since he alone could know the future—what SHOULD COME TO PASS in after times. What to him was prophecy is in large degree history to us living at this late day. God's kingdom was represented by A STONE—something not of human composition or make—it was even CUT OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN WITHOUT HANDS, divine in its origin as well as in its nature and end. So we acknowledge of its king that he was "conceived by the Holy Ghost." Yet this kingdom is not suddenly complete. It began, in the dream, to smite the image upon its feet and break them to pieces, yet went on until the whole image was ground to powder and became as chaff of the summer threshing floors. The stone increased till it became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. Compare with this Is. ii. 2, and Micah iv. 1, 2. Compare also Matt. xxi. 42–44. THE DREAM IS CERTAIN—THE INTERPRETATION SURE. There is no magic or intrigue about either. They are God's truths. To-day we see how clearly much of it has been already fulfilled, and thereby our strength should be strengthened to look for the final consummation of it. We daily pray, as our Lord has taught us, "Thy kingdom come." See 1 Cor. xv. 25–28; Rev. xix. 6. The world-kingdoms and the kingdom of God are in opposition. The triumph of the latter is certain; its conquests are being made daily. This century has seen more progress of its principles than any since the first of our era. God's word is everywhere spread abroad; has been proclaimed, perhaps, in every land. Nations have been born in a day, and the cross is triumphing over the world. Meanwhile, we are to be laborers together with God, to promote his kingdom; not only praying and receiving, but giving and working.

Reflections.

1. The secret things belong unto God.

2. Note the use and value of prayer.

3. Observe the humility that belongs to true worth.

4. Daniel stopt to thank God first, though it was his head that was in danger.

5. Nebuchadnezzar's unreasonableness redounded to the glory of God. So "he makes the wrath of man to praise him."

6. If we wonder why God made a special revelation to such a man as Nebuchadnezzar, let it be observed

that he was head of a universal world-power, and the facts in the case would come abroad to all his subjects, so spreading the knowledge and glory of the one true God.

7. Some think that when Nebuchadnezzar said "the thing is gone from me," he did not refer to having forgotten the dream, but merely said his decree had issued, and was unchangeable, that the wise men should tell him first the dream, as proof that they could interpret it. If this is correct, the king had not forgotten his dream, but was merely putting a class of professional experts to a severe and sure test.

THE FIERY FURNACE.

May 26. Daniel iii. 21-27.

Explanation.—The "Friey Furnace" tried the three young Hebrews, and as they were willing to "suffer affliction" for God's sake—the Son of God was seen walking with them in the flames as their sustainer and deliverer. So with us. The "Fiery Furnace" of *affliction* (see design) while it brings to us the flames of *Trial* and *Suffering* also brings to us the "Mighty to Save." Jesus our Helper (represented in design by the cross between the words *Trial* and *Suffering* and the flame). Thus *affliction* brings Jesus closer to us and teaches *us* a "closer walk with God." He succors us and sustains us by teaching us that we will not be "tempted above that we are able," and gives us the assurance—"My *grace* is sufficient for thee."

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON.

Tradition makes it about sixteen years after Nebuchadnezzar's dream that the events concerning the great image took place. Meanwhile, the Babylonian king had gone on with his conquests, among which was Jerusalem, whose people were in still further numbers carried off captive, and their city was destroyed. It seemed then a fitting time for this heathen monarch to celebrate his victories, and he did it in his own peculiar religious way. He made a colossal image, likely representing his favorite god Bel-Merodach. It was sixty cubits high and six cubits broad; this height included the pedestal, it is supposed, since the proportions of a man's height to his breadth are six to one. As the cubit varied in dimensions in different times and countries, we cannot exactly fix the size of this image, but suppose it was, including pedestal, ninety feet high and nine broad. It was probably of wood, covered with gold. "In the neighborhood of Babylon," Keil says, "there are at present to be found, in the S. S. E. of the ruins representing the former capital, a row of mounds bearing the name Dura, and at the end of them there is a smaller one which forms a square six metres (nineteen and a half feet) high, with a basis of fourteen metres (forty-six feet), wholly built of unburnt brick, which shows so surprising a resemblance to a colossal statue and its pedestal that Offert believes this little mound to be the remains of the golden image erected by Nebuchadnezzar." Measurements show that the glittering head of the colossal image, if placed at this point, could be seen from all parts of the vast city. Nebuchadnezzar's policy was to appoint in each conquered province a governor subservient to him, from among the people of that province. As it was important to have some bond of union among them all, as well as some common exhibition of subserviency to the conqueror, Nebuchadnezzar summoned all these deputies to the dedication, and ordered that they all with the people of the capital should, whenever the bands of music struck up, fall down and worship this image of

the national god, on pain of being cast into a burning, fiery furnace, if any one refused. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had, on Daniel's request, been set over the province of Babylon; and now these three were reported by some of the envious Chaldeans as refusing to comply with the king's order. This seemed to Nebuchadnezzar an especially high-handed outrage in captives who had been promoted to high place by him, and who thus set so evil an example right in the capital and before the assembled deputies. So in great fury he called them to account. They acknowledged the report to be true, and said that under no circumstances could they worship an image, and that, though a fiery furnace awaited them, they preferred that fate, trusting in Jehovah, rather than to provoke the true God by idolatry. Thereupon the despot fell into still greater fury, and ordered the furnace to be heated intensely and his strongest men to bind and cast in the refractory Hebrews.

Cast Down.

Verse 21. THEN. Their time was up; their probation in the matter was ended. All probation ends. THESE MEN. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Daniel's companions. As Daniel is not mentioned here, and as his character was such that he would undoubtedly have stood firmly by his godly comrades, it is naturally supposed that at this time he was absent on some important business. WERE BOUND. Likely in chains of iron; for afterward it was a matter of surprise to the king that they were *loose*, walking in the midst of the fire. Now it would have been no wonder if bands of rope or other inflammable material had been burnt off the moment of contact with the intense flame. IN THEIR COATS, THEIR HOSEN, AND THEIR HATS. That is, just as they were, in their ordinary dress. "Hosen," at the time the Bible was translated into English, meant trousers, not stockings; and the word rendered "hats" means rather an outer loose garment, like a cloak. One thing is sure—their dress was *not* like ours, but Oriental in its fashion. Perhaps a general idea of Oriental dress may have been gathered from some of the attendants from the East at the great Exposition of '76. The Babylonian monuments, rescued from the ruins, generally represent the people as bare-headed and bare-footed. Some think some of these words indicate articles that were badges of the offices these men held. At all events, just as they were, they were securely bound and CAST INTO THE MIDST OF THE BURNING, FIERY FURNACE. From what is afterwards said, it appears that this furnace was constructed with an opening at the top and also a door of communication below. It may be illustrated by a lime-kiln, familiar to all; only it appears to have been larger and likely constructed with more exactness and architectural propriety. This furnace may have been constructed and ordinarily used for such a purpose as smelting iron ore, burning brick, or the like. For those people must not be supposed ignorant of arts and mechanism. In reference to the kind of punishment compare Gen. xxxviii. 24, and Levit. xxi. 9. True, some think posthumous burning is there meant. In Jer. xxix. 22, however, we have an instance of burning to death by the Babylonians, who are said to have learned it from the practice of the Assyrians centuries before. Chardin, a traveler in Persia, in the seventeenth century, speaks of burning alive as inflicted there, especially on those who contributed to produce scarcity of food, or used false weights, or disregarded the tax laws, and says, "The cooks were fixed on spits, and roasted over a gentle fire, and the bakers were cast into a gentle oven. In the year 1668, when the famine was raging, I saw in the royal residence of Ispahan one of these ovens burning to terrify the bakers, and to prevent their taking advantage of the scarcity to increase their gains." Horrible as this mode of death seems, it has been used by all sects of religious persecutors, both Romish and Protestant; all parts of Europe have been polluted by it, and even our own country has the stigma of having had "witches" burned on her freedom-boasting soil.

Verse 22. THE KING'S COMMANDMENT WAS URGENT, for he was in a "rage and fury" over the defiance, as

it seemed to him, showed him by these Hebrews whom he had promoted to office. Such feelings produce hasty actions and make food for repentance. THE FURNACE was EXCEEDING HOT by the king's express order (verse 19), his rage blinding him to the fact that the hottest fire would soonest put an end to his victims; but he seems to have been somewhat shaken by their determination and their avowal of God's ability to deliver them, and therefore made the hottest possible oven. The consequence was that THE FLAME OF THE FIRE shot up from the opened top into which the captives were to be thrown, and SLEW THOSE MEN THAT TOOK UP the condemned to the furnace top, although they were "the most mighty men that were in his army." This was doubtless an unexpected result, but conclusively showed the power of those flames on men not under special divine protection.

Verse 23. Though the executioners died in the act, they accomplished what they were ordered to do, and THESE THREE MEN — SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABED-NEGO—FELL DOWN BOUND INTO THE MIDST OF THE BURNING, FIERY FURNACE. As people are of the same nature in every land and time, we can imagine what crowds of lookers-on there were at this execution by fire, and what an awe at the fate of the condemned took hold upon many, whilst many others rejoiced at the vindication of their monarch's authority over these stubborn Hebrews, towards whom they felt no little jealousy and envy. But the end was not yet. Man proposes, God disposes. God's servants were indeed cast down,

But Not Destroyed.

Verse 24. THEN. The narrative seems to indicate the lapse of some time, longer or shorter, between the events previously related and what now follows. As sure a thing as the despotic king seemed to have of it, he yet remembered what these men had said about God's deliverance of them, and he felt moved to look through the lower door of the furnace, to see what possibly was going on within. Then how was he ASTONISHED—the form in our Bibles is an old and obsolete one for this word—at what he saw! His rage and fury, and his complacency at having gratified these passions, now gave way to all-absorbing amazement. Perhaps he had had his throne so placed that when the furnace door was opened he could see within. Now he ROSE UP IN HASTE and called for his COUNSELORS; THREE men, BOUND, was it not that we CAST INTO THE FIRE? Was it not so? Am I dreaming? They answered him, TRUE, O KING, it was just as you say. We are witnesses.

Verse 25. What, then, is this that I see? What can it mean? Lo, I see FOUR men, LOOSE, WALKING IN THE MIDST OF THE FIRE, whose lightest part killed my strongest soldiers, and there these men are walking as if in a summer-garden, not writhing in agony, but at their ease, pacing to and fro, AND THEY HAVE NO HURT. And his voice grew husky as he added, AND THE FORM OF THE FOURTH IS LIKE A SON OF THE GODS! The form of the fourth was so striking as to impress him that it was supernatural. Our English version leads us at once to think of the Son of God, who afterwards "became flesh and dwelt among us," but Nebuchadnezzar had no such knowledge or idea of the second person in the Godhead. He merely supposed it was one of the generation of the gods, of whom there were gods many, and who were supposed at times to appear in human form. That the fourth one was the "Son of God" we are quite ready to admit; but we know more than Nebuchadnezzar did. "He with whom Abraham pleaded for guilty Sodom, and with whom Jacob wrestled at Penuel till the dawning of the day; he whose fiery glory filled the bush without consuming it as Moses turned aside to see the sight; he who appeared to Joshua as the captain of the host of the Lord, and to Manoah and his wife as the wonderful one; he who spoke to Gideon at the wine-press of Ophrah, and to David at the threshing-floor of Araunah, was the same great and gracious one who walked in the furnace with his persecuted servants here, and was the second person of the glorious Trinity." (*Dr. W. M. Taylor.*) This is the generally received

opinion of those Old Testament manifestations, that they were pre-incarnate manifestations of the second person in the Godhead, and that he is meant by "The Angel of the Covenant."

Verse 26. THE MOUTH, or door, was probably the place where the fuel was usually put in. To this the king came near, and calling the three Hebrews by name, said, YE SERVANTS OF THE MOST HIGH GOD, COME FORTH AND COME HITHER. The king had, long before this, in view of Daniel's interpretation of his dream, called Jehovah a "God of gods" (ii. 47), and had heard Daniel call him "the God of heaven," and "the great God:" so now he calls him "the most high God," without, however, discarding other gods, as is manifest from what followed. Nebuchadnezzar seems often to have been im pressed with God's greatness, but never to have become an humble, devout worshiper of him.

Verse 27. Then the officers of all ranks, and from all parts of the empire, that had come up to the consecration and worship of the great image that the king had set up, SAW THESE MEN, first cast down into the fiercely hot furnace, but not destroyed by its fires, standing before them all as miracles of saving power. They constituted a body of witnesses, who would go and tell these events in all quarters of the realm, and so the knowledge of the true God would be spread abroad. UPON WHOSE BODIES THE FIRE HAD NO POWER, and not even A HAIR OF THEIR HEAD was SINGED by it, and no change by scorching had passed on their COATS, loose mantles so easily burned; and THE SMELL OF FIRE HAD NOT PASSED ON THEM. They stood unscathed by the fiery ordeal, living monuments to Jehovah's power and faithfulness. The testimony of these witnesses was sustained by a royal decree throughout the realm, forbidding, on severe penalties, any one to speak against the God of the Hebrews, inasmuch as "no other god" could "deliver after this sort;" and the three captives were advanced to still higher positions in the province of Babylon.

Reflections.

1. "All things work together for good to them that love God." The fire intended to consume was the occasion of advancement in position and favor.

2. God does not always deliver his faithful servants out of the fire, but he is always with them in it. Stephen was stoned to death, but he saw the Son of man standing at the right hand of God, risen to save him, before he fell asleep. Since his day many Christian martyrs have gone to glory *via* the stake and the rack.

3. Bernard de Palissy, a French maker of eathenware, and a man of parts, was a Calvinist. The French king, Henry III., said to him one day, that he would be compelled to give him up to his enemies unless he changed his religion. "You have often said to me, sire," was the undaunted reply of De Palissy, "that you pitied me; but as for me, I pity you, who have given utterance to such words as 'I shall be compelled.' These are unkingly words; and I say to you in royal phrase, that neither the Guises, nor all your people, nor yourself, are able to compel an humble manufacturer of earthenware to bend his knee before statues." (*Scripture Treasury.*) Palissy was made of martyr stuff, and came near being burned, but he died in 1590 before his sentence was pronounced, maintaining courageous steadfastness till the end.

4. "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."

5. See Is. xliii. 1–2; and 2 Cor. iv. 9.

6. Many a hot fire has been kindled by man's rage and fury, which has burnt only himself and his friends, leaving those unscathed for whom it was intended.

7. St. James (iii. 6) says, "The tongue is a fire * * * * set on fire of hell;" and David (Ps. lii. 4.) uses the phrase, "All-devouring words." Furnaces like Nebuchadnezzar's, and martyrs' stakes, are out of date; but there are still burning tongues, sometimes heated "one seven times more" than usual, directed toward the devouring of victims of passion.

But, withal, these too are cruel, unrefined and un-christian. — Keep cool.

8. To spend much time on the "coats, hosen and hats" of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, would be to wander far from the proper object of Sunday-school teaching.

Infant Department.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS.

BY PROF. E. S. BREIDENBAUGH, M. A.

DEAR TEACHERS: Last month I recommended that you should arrange flower beds near your school door,—don't forget them. This month I recommend,

First. That the room be thoroughly cleansed.

Secondly. Brighten up every ornament.

Thirdly. Call on all families connected with your church, and see if there are not children who can begin with pleasant May weather to attend school. Visit, for the same purpose, such families as have no church or Sabbath-school connections.

Fourthly. Have the Golden Text printed on card-board or paper. Give a card each Sabbath to each child, with the text for the next Sabbath. Tell the children to learn it. Prepare to be surprised, for many more will be made acquainted with the text than you had supposed possible.

I have given suggestions for May 5th on a lesson different from the International Series, as more suitable for the Infant Department.

Details have not been given in these notes, merely suggestions. Omit larger and unusual words as much as possible, in teaching.

May God bless your labors, dear friends. B.

The Young Bible-Reader.

May 5, 1878.

If possible, secure one of the large pictures representing Timothy at the knees of his mother and grandmother, engaged in the study of the Holy Scripture. Describe the strange dress —the manner of life—the character of the furniture.

During the time when Christ was teaching and curing the sick, there lived in a town called Derbe, a family of whom we know the name of the grandmother Lois, the mother Eunice, and the little boy Timothy. These three would often sit together no doubt, as in the picture—what were they doing? Reading the Bible and talking together about what they had read. Describe the character of the books used in those days. The material being parchment—and the leaves fastened together, rolled up from either end.

These persons seem much interested in that which they are reading. The good old grandmother and the loving mother were very kind to the little boy; so that St. Paul, the great preacher of Jesus, in writing a letter to Timothy, which letter is in our Bible, said that from a youth he had known the Bible. Repeat 2 Tim. iii. 15. So that when Timothy grew older and heard Paul preach about Jesus, he began to love Jesus, he went with Paul preaching and became a preacher and teacher, himself. He was a very good and noble man.

Your parents and friends will read the Bible to you, and if you ask them will help you to understand it.

Now we will ask four questions about the Bible. I wonder what answer Timothy would have given, if he were sitting here with us.

I. Who has given the Bible? We read the Book of Isaiah, of Daniel; the Gospel of St. Matthew, of St. John. This means that Isaiah, John, etc., wrote whatever God told them to write. So it is God who has given the Bible. Other names for the Holy Bible are Holy Scriptures. These mean Holy God writings, God words. Old and New Testament, meaning the will or word of God, *the old* as written before the time of Jesus, the part Timothy

read; *the new* as written after Jesus had ascended again to heaven.

Timothy would say of the Bible: It is the word—the message God sends us to tell us of His love, of our sins, of what we must do to obey Him, and how to live that we may enter heaven.

Sir Walter Scott, when on his dying bed, asked his nephew for *The Book*, meaning that best of all books, the Bible.

II. To whom has God given this Bible? To every one? Yes. To each one? Yes; to me; that is best of all.

Repeat as a whisper-song (that is, in a whisper),

"Holy Bible, book divine,
Precious treasure, thou art mine."

How can we be sure the Bible is given for little children, as well as for older persons?

If answers do not occur to the children, call attention to the saying of Jesus — Suffer little children, etc.; Jesus and the children in the temple: the Bible tells us of children, *e. g.* Joash, Samuel, Joseph, Timothy, best of all, of the CHILD JESUS. It speaks of children's duties, and has one commandment specially for children—Honor thy father and mother, etc.

If Timothy had been asked this question, he might have given some part of this answer, but the Old Testament only spoke of Jesus as coming; did not tell of Jesus as a child and teacher.

But there is more of an answer. Jesus died for children as well as for older persons, and they have souls to save as well. Ought they not to know what the Bible teaches?

III. Can you understand the Bible? Timothy no doubt would have said that he understood enough to know that he had a bad heart, and the Bible told him what to do with his wicked heart: we know more than Timothy, for we have the New Testament, which tells us of Jesus and His precious love.

Repeat what Jesus said. John v. 39. Teacher can explain something of a coal mine, or silver or gold mine.

The miner searches after—tries to find—the coal, or gold, or silver; works hard; does not give up if at first he does not succeed. So we must search—work hard, at trying to find out what the Bible teaches us.

As the grandmother and mother of Timothy explained the Bible to him, so we can have help from our friends. Jesus will help us—does help us.

IV. If we know what the Bible teaches us, what ought we to do?

Suppose a man asked the way to some town, and turned about to go the other way. We would call him very foolish. We wish to go to heaven. The Bible tells us the way, which is by Jesus. Suppose we know this, and turn around and obey Satan. How foolish! It is worse, for we may, we will, lose our souls.

Explain the positive value of the north star, and how sailors, or persons lost in a forest, delight in seeing it. Speak of the star of Bethlehem. The Bible is the star to lead us to Jesus. Draw on the board a large star, and an open Bible within it. Show use the miner makes of his gold or silver or coal. Does not throw it away. Show how much worse to forget and neglect the Bible.

Urge on each child the necessity of becoming a Bible reader; a Bible lover; a Bible doer. Use Golden Text, 2 Tim. iii. 15.

The Boy Captives in Babylon.

May 12. Daniel i. 1-21.

Review. Obtain by questioning the account of Timothy; and asking the four questions used in the lesson, obtain an account of your own explanations. (This will show you whether you have clearly explained the several points.)

We have had a number of lessons about bad kings. We learned about God's punishment. We learned three Sabbaths ago about Jeremiah, who taught and warned the kings and people. Show that it was apparently useless, for the people went on sinning.

Finally they were made captives by the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar, who took the king Jehoiakim, and many of the people to his city in Babylon. 2 Kings xxiv. 8–16.

Describe the journey to be made from Jerusalem to Babylon. Describe Babylon, and the great power of this wonderful king Nebuchadnezzar.

Captives were not made slaves, but were compelled to live where the king pleased, and not allowed to go into their own country,—but the Babylonians themselves were subject to almost as strict laws.

Among these captives were a number of young men, whom the king wished to have taught and trained, thus hoping to secure good officers and have the people *love* him. V. 3. Eunuchs,—had charge of the household. V. 4. Healthy children, well educated.

V. 5. The best of food to be provided; persons on good, wholesome food are more likely to work well, and study well, than on poor food.

V. 6, 7. Daniel means *God is my judge*; Belteshazzar, *Bel is the prince*. Bel was the heathen God. Names were changed because the king wished to show the young men that they were in subjection.

The action of Daniel as given in vs. 8–16, is due to his desire to obey God, who had forbidden the eating of meat that was killed by bleeding to death, and that had part offered to idols. *Vide* Ex. xxxiv. 15, and Lev. xvii. 10–14. Daniel also refused to drink wine, because it was offered to idols. At every meal the ancients offered libation, that is, poured of their wine on the ground as an offering to the gods,—as we give thanks or offer grace before meals. Pulse—plain, vegetable food.

They preferred plain and good food, if they had enough, and God blessed it, to rich food if God did not bless it.

Explain the result. Show also that it was not the food, so much as love and service of God, that gave a pleasant face: bad men seldom are pleasant to look on.

Show how they increased in knowledge. V. 17–19, they studied because they wished to please God—this reason ought to urge all of us to study hard.

We will find out much more in regard to these young men—they were like Timothy, earnest Bible boys.

In teaching this lesson try to show the difference in schools—pupils sitting on the floor, walking in parks and groves, using a stylus in place of pen, and written rolls in place of printed books.

Show the children that we are taught:

That Bible boys must not forget God's commandments. We can eat anything we please that does not injure the body. But Bible boys must avoid whisky, they must not gamble, even when with persons who drink or gamble. Bible boys and Bible girls should study, and keep to their books. This obedience brings good results—for example, not only Daniel, but also Samuel and Joseph.

Repeat Golden Text—Ps. cxi. 10.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.

May 19. Daniel ii.

In Review, call special attention to the reason of the action of Daniel and his friends, and the result. Repeat the Golden Text.

We to-day have a lesson showing how Daniel used his education—how also he had profited by his Bible-reading. The teacher can best employ the time in a paraphrased relation of the incidents. I offer a few explanations.

V. 1. Describe the bed and bedchamber used in the East.

Illustrate the fright of the king by awakening from a nightmare.

V. 2. *Astrologers* were persons who, by examining the position of the stars, pretended to tell persons of the future. The others also claimed to be able to do miracles and foretell events. These men really knew a greal deal, but they also made these pretensions.

V. 5. Does not mean that the king had forgotten his dream, but he said, I have ordered that you shall tell me what my dream was; then I will know whether you tell me the truth or not, when you give me your explanation of it—an excellent plan. But it did not please these wise men, for they merely pretended—did not really have so much knowledge as to be able to tell what dreams mean; for dreams have no meaning by which we can tell what is going to happen to us.

The punishment of cutting in pieces is common among the people of the East. Houses being of sun-dried brick, they could easily be made a pile of refuse.

V. 9. The king claimed that they had prepared a false statement.

Vs. 15, 24. Daniel was kind to his companions in learning.

Vs. 19–23 are poetry in the original, but in English they still have a beautiful ring. Repeat them in concert.

Vs. 28, 30. All the praise belongs to God, as the wise men had said, v. 11.

In describing the image, be as graphic as possible. You can omit any detailed reference to the special history of the nations referred to, but can refer to the glory of the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar as shown in the head of gold. His kingdom was a very large one; he conquered many nations; he built many palaces in Babylon; he constructed the magnificent gardens suspended in the air. The followers of Nebuchadnezzar had a great kingdom, but the Medo-Persians were not so magnificent as the first nor as strong, as is shown by the fact that Alexander the Great with his strong army destroyed and succeeded them. (Alexander was a great general; he is said to have wept that he had no more countries yet to conquer.) Stronger was the Roman government, which was very great, and powerful and rich; governed nearly all the world as known to them, when Jesus was born. This was followed by many smaller and less strong kingdoms. Show that the rule of Jesus is the strongest, governing souls, and lives, and kingdoms. As the soul is more valuable than clay, or iron, or brass, or silver, or gold, so the kingdom of Jesus is the greater.

The Roman emperors and the rulers who followed tried to prevent persons from being Christians, but with no effect. All who oppose are destroyed. Show that not man but God is the Doer, as represented by the stone cut, obtained from the mountain, without hands.

Daniel did not fear the king—he did not hesitate to tell him the truth. Nebuchadnezzar not only honored Daniel, but praised the God of Daniel.

V. 46. Not worshiped Daniel, but Daniel's God.

Daniel did not become proud; all praise belonged to God. So all praise belongs to God for what we are able to do—or what we have; hence we must thank God for all; for God is Ruler over all, hence we are safe in Him, and have all our knowledge from Him. He will teach us—not the secrets of other men's hearts, but of our own; which is important for us, to know our sins, our help coming from God. Repeat Golden Text, v. 28. "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets."

The Fiery Furnace.

May 26. Daniel iii.

In Review impress the thought that God is all in all. God is ruler over hearts of men. God gives all knowledge. Repeat Golden Text.

To-day we have another lesson which shows that good comes to all who are God-loving, Bible readers. Bible boys and Bible girls are loved of God, and protected by him. We have to-day a contrast between a haughty, proud, self-confident, powerful king, who was yet weak and fearful of men,—for no doubt it was the clamor of his heathen advisers to show that Nebuchadnezzar still held other gods than the God of Daniel, that in part induced this image making. He also was elated by the vision he had seen, and wished to have men so worship him. On the other hand were humble poor, men who had no thought of self,—but these did not fear men, nor were driven to do anything but what recommended itself to them as right, because all their confidence was in God.

The customs here recounted were common in the East.

In recounting the incidents, picture the great plain, with the magnificent city in full view; all kinds of dress; the glitter of gold, and silver, and jewels (read descriptions of the Eastern costumes—space prevents giving the details); the haughty bearing of the governors and princes; the pillar surmounted with a human head all covered with gold. Describe the cry of the herald, the sudden burst of music, the prostration of all,—no, three stood solitary. (Daniel was not present.) The scene before Nebuchadnezzar shows the jealousy and anger of the wise men at the promotion of the Bible boys. The anger of the king was not only that

his pride was hurt, but also because he thought—I have done everything for these fellows, but they will not obey me. How ungrateful! Possibly they merely omitted it from inadvertence; but they say, "No, we intended not to fall down. We worship none but God, even if a burning fire awaits us."

The heat of the furnace was shown by the death of the executioners.

When the king says "Son of God" (v. 25) he means to affirm that the fourth person is more than man; he did not mean by the expression, as we do "Jesus."

The astonishment of the king was because the men were unhurt, and also from the presence of a fourth person.

Again Nebuchadnezzar honors the God of the Bible boys, (now grown to be men,) and does this in praising God and giving honors to these three.

Impress on the minds of the children the fact that though no fire that injures the body threatens us, there are worse fires. Show how this applies to Passions (Anger, Jealousy, Hate, etc.,) which now are on us; Remorse, which awaits all who sin. Disobey your parents, and you cannot look them in the face.

Show there awaits the sinner the fire of Hell.

God will save us. But we must follow the example of those of whom we have studied in our lessons.

BE BIBLE READERS AND DOERS.

Repeat Golden Text, Dan. iii. 17.

"*Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace.*"

Gleanings from the Great Field.

NEWS AND NOTES.

BY REV. S. B. BARNITZ.

RAILROAD FAVORS TO ATLANTA.—Railroad tickets to Atlanta and return will be on sale in some of the leading cities as follows: New York, $36.05; Philadelphia, $32 75; Baltimore, $29.15; Cincinnati, $34.43: Chicago, $33.05; St. Louis, $34.95.

"ILLUSTRATIONS AND HELPFUL HINTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSONS FOR 1878."—We have received this *helpful* and practical work for the second quarter of the year, and find it full of good things which can be used by every superintendent and many teachers. Price 25 cents. Fairbanks & Co., Chicago.

PENNSYLVANIA SABBATH-SCHOOL STATE CONVENTION.—The fourteenth annual meeting of the Sabbath-school Convention of the State of Pennsylvania, will be held at Williamsport, Pa., on the 11th, 12th and 13th days of June. A large delegation and a profitable convention may be anticipated.

WHEELING, W. VA.—After years of prayer and effort, Wheeling is to have a Sunday-school Association, composed of all the schools of the city. A preliminary meeting has been held in the English Lutheran Church, and the organization will be in working order before the Atlanta Convention. Hon. G. L. Cramner is likely to to be the president. Success!

THE PRIMARY TEACHER'S MONTHLY.—This valuable magazine for the Primary Department is on our table for April, and is really a choice number. It has in it several beautiful things for Easter, which we heartily commend to our own schools. It is refreshing to note that scarcely a Sunday-school journal, denominational or otherwise, has come to us for April, without some exercise bringing before scholars and teachers the proper observance of the anniversary of our Lord's resurrection.

LUTHERAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FREDERICK, MARYLAND.—The entertainment given by the Lutheran Sunday-school, Tuesday night, in the City Hall, was a decided success, alike creditable in point of members in attendance, as well as the character of the performance. At an early hour crowds of people poured into the large hall, filling it to repletion by the time of commencement of the concert. At 7:45 the curtain was raised, and a lovely sight opened to the view of the audience. Myriads of Little Old Folks, handsomely attired and gracefully arranged, filled the stage. As representatives of "ye olden time" they appeared to perfection, and in their attractive apparel gave a correct impersonation of the styles and costumes then in vogue.

After a statement by Mr. C. V. S. Levy, the concert, under the direction of Mr. William M. Hardt, was formally opened by Master Clarence Schroeder in a neat preparatory speech.

The entertainment was under the supervision of Mr. William M. Hardt, who was ably assisted by Misses Fannie Hane, Tillie Fout, Louisa Englebrecht, Fannie Haller, Alice Ebbert, and Messrs. C. V. S. Levy, Hy. M. Nixdorf, Thomas H. Haller, W. I. Parson and William H. Keller. Miss Lucy Reich presided at the piano, assisted by George R. Wisong, with the flute.—*Frederick Times.*

He who offends against heaven has none to whom he can pray.

2d Quarter. **AUGSBURG LESSON LEAF.** *May 5, 1878.*
Lesson XVIII. **International Bible Lessons.** JEREMIAH lii. 1-11.

THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

1. Zedekiah *was* one and twenty years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.
2. And he did *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.
3. For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.
4. ¶ And it came to pass, in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about.
5. So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.
6. And in the fourth month, in the ninth *day* of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land.
7. Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the gate between the two walls which *was* by the king's garden; (now the Chaldeans *were* by the city round about:) and they went by the way of the plain.
8. ¶ But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him.
9. Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah, in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him.
10. And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah.
11. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

CENTRAL TEXT.—Verses 3, 10 and 11. Commit to memory.

LESSON TAUGHT.—The consequences of departing from God, though sometimes long delayed, are sure and sore.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed." Lam. i. 8.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

M. Jeremiah lii. 1-30.
T. Lam. i.
W. " ii.
Th. " iii.
F. " iv. and v.
Sat. Levit. xxvi. 14-39.
S. Ez. vii.

BRIEF NOTES.—Zedekiah was the twentieth sovereign of Judah—all being of one dynasty, the house of David. Israel had nineteen rulers, of nine different dynasties. "Jeremiah of Libnah" we know nothing about. "Zedekiah" was the name given by Nebuchadnezzar to Josiah's son Mattaniah, whom the conqueror set on Judah's throne. "The anger of the Lord," his hatred of Judah's persistent sinning, led him to give the king and people over to their own ungodly ways, with the sure consequences of ruin. "The king of Babylon" had made Judah tributary some years before. "Babylon," formerly a province of Assyria, on the decline of that empire, became capital of a southern kingdom, and Nebuchadr (or n) essar was its second king. He was distinguished for his conquests and the magnificence with which he strengthened and adorned his capital. We will hear more about him. The "forts" were towers erected on mounds, from which they could cast their missiles over the wall. "Broken up"—broken through; an entrance was effected. Jerusalem was divided into the upper city, on lower ground, toward the north, and the lower city, on high ground, southward, embracing Mt. Zion. The enemy came in from the north, and the fugitives went out in the opposite direction. "The way of the plain"—towards Jordan. At "Riblah" far northward on the Orontes river the king had his camp, superintending from it the siege of Tyre at same time with the siege of Jerusalem. The date of the captivity is about 587 B. C.

Explanatory Questions.

GIVEN OVER TO SIN.

1. How many sovereigns had Judah up to this time?
2. How many good reigns can you count among them? How many bad?
3. How old was Zedekiah when he became king? How long did he reign?
4. What might he have learned from the history of his predecessors?
5. Who spake to him the word of the Lord for his guidance? See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12.
6. After all, what course did he pursue?
7. What is said of God's hand and purpose in all this? Compare 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13.
8. What is the topic above? Consult Ex. x. 1, 20, 27; Deut. ii. 30; John xii. 40; Heb. iii. 13: and explain.
9. How long a time had elapsed since the division of the kingdom?
10. What had become of Israel? How long before this?

GIVEN OVER TO CAPTIVITY.

11. Who came against Jerusalem? When? What were his tactics?
12. Tell about Nebuchadnezzar, and his relations to Judah and her king. Consult 2 Chron. xxxvi 1-13, and 2 Kings xxiv.
13. How long did the siege last? What was the condition of the city? See verse 6, and Lamentations.
14. What attempt at escape was made? (Explain.) With what success?
15. What became of Zedekiah? Where was judgment passed upon him?
16. What did Nebuchadnezzar do in Zedekiah's presence?
17. What did he do to Zedekiah? What was Zedekiah's end? Compare Ez. xii. 13.
18. What became of the city and people of Jerusalem? See the rest of the chapter.
19. Why did this happen? See Golden Text, and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12-17.
20. When, and how long before, had all this been predicted for a warning? See Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii.
21. How long, according to Jeremiah (xxv. 11) was this captivity to last?
22. What are some of the lessons we learn from the history of Israel and Judah?

HYMN. L. M.

O turn, great Ruler of the skies,
Turn from my sin Thy searching eyes,
Nor let the offences of my hand
Within Thy book recorded stand.

Give me a will to Thine subdued,
A conscience pure, a soul renewed;
Nor let me, wrapt in endless gloom,
An outcast from Thy presence roam.

2d Quarter. **AUGSBURG LESSON LEAF.** *May 12, 1878.*

Lesson XIX. **International Bible Lessons.** DANIEL i. 8-17.

THE CAPTIVES IN BABYLON.

8. ¶ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9. Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

10. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which *are* of your sort? then shall ye make *me* endanger my head to the king.

11. Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

12. Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

17. ¶ As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

CENTRAL TEXT.—Verses 8, 15 and 17. Commit to memory.

LESSON TAUGHT.—God honors them that honor Him.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"A good understanding have all they that do his commandments." Ps. cxi. 10.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

M. 2 Kings xxiv.
T. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 1-21.
W. Jeremiah xxxvi.
Th. 2 Kings xx. 14-19.
F. Daniel i.
Sat. Gen. xxxix. 1-6, 21-23.
S. Psalm i.

BRIEF NOTES.—"Daniel" means *judge of God;* his heathen name Belteshazzar means *prince of Bel.* He was a lad, twelve or fifteen years old, when carried off to Babylon about 606 B. C. We know little or nothing about him except what is given in the Scriptures. He wrote the book which bears his name. Some of it was written in Hebrew and some in Chaldee, the language of the Babylonians. See first part of the chapter. "Purposed." Here we see a strong will and a lively conscience, indicating much sterling character in one so young and under such circumstances. "Defile himself." By eating food forbidden to Jews, or uncleansed from blood, or that had been connected with idol worship. Compare 1 Cor. viii and x. "The wine" was usually, some of it, poured out in honor of the gods. Temperance in eating and drinking may also have influenced Daniel. "Eunuchs" were employed as officers of the king's household. "Worse liking"—looking worse. "Your sort"—or class. "Children"—youths. "Pulse" is a general name for seeds of vegetables, such as peas, beans, etc., suitable for porridge. "Knowledge, etc."—are to be sought from God, the source of them. Simple diet is favorable to clear countenance, clear head and clear conscience; but God's special blessing was on these lads.

Explanatory Questions.

DANIEL'S PURPOSE.

1. Who was Daniel? Where was he? How and when did he come there?
2. Who were his three friends? For what were they four selected?
3. What advantages had they already for such a position?
4. What provision was made for their sustenance?
5. What purpose did Daniel form in his heart? Explain.
6. What reasons may he have had for regarding this provision as defiling?
7. What does this determination show respecting Daniel's character?
8. About how old was he at this time?
9. To whom did he make request to be allowed to carry out his purpose? Why to him?
10. How did this officer regard Daniel? What led him to this regard?
11. What fear did Ashpenaz express, and why?
12. What proposition did Daniel make to the steward over him and his friends?
13. What is pulse?

GOD'S BLESSING.

14. What was the result of the examination at the end of the ten days?
15. Was there anything naturally in the character of their diet to produce such an effect?
16. To what else may we also ascribe it? Compare Prov. x. 22; and 1 Sam. ii. 30.
17. Besides this beauty of countenance, what did God give the four youths?
18. What special gift had Daniel?
19. How long did their discipline last? Verses 5 and 18.
20. What is said of their standing at the final examination? Verses 19 and 20.
21. What lesson about conscience is here taught, especially to young people away from home?
22. What does the Bible say wine is? Prov. xx. 1. Of its effects? Prov. xxiii. 29-35.
23. On what other grounds is it good not to drink wine at all? Rom. xiv. 21.

HYMN. C. M.

How shall the young secure their hearts,
And guard their lives from sin?
Thy word the choicest rules imparts
To keep the conscience clean.

'Tis like the sun, a heavenly light
That guides us all the day;
And through the dangers of the night
A lamp to lead our way.

Thy precepts make me truly wise:
I hate the sinner's road:
I hate mine own vain thoughts that rise,
But love Thy law, my God.

Thy word is everlasting truth;
How pure is every page!
That holy book shall guide our youth,
And well support our age.

2d Quarter. **AUGSBURG LESSON LEAF.** *May 19, 1878.*

Lesson XX. **International Bible Lessons.** DANIEL ii. 36-45.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.

36. ¶ This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.
37. Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.
38. And wherever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold.
39. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.
40. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*, and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.
41. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.
42. And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.
43. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.
44. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* **it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.**
45. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* **certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.**

CENTRAL TEXT.—Verses 44 and 45. Commit to memory.

LESSON TAUGHT.—God's kingdom shall triumph o'er all the world.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets."—Dan. ii. 28.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

M. Daniel ii.
T. " v.
W. " vii.
Th. " viii.
F. Rev. xvii.
Sat. " xviii.
S. " xix.

BRIEF NOTES.—First Daniel told "the dream," describing the great image the king had seen, and then went on to "the interpretation." He says "we," including his three companions who united with him in prayer to God for the desired knowledge. Verse 38 must not be taken too exactly. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was the first one that we may call *universal.* "Another kingdom"—the Medo-Persian, established by Cyrus, the Great. "Another third kingdom"—the Macedonian empire, established by Alexander, the Great. "The fourth kingdom"—the Roman empire, in its glory at the beginning of our era. The Babylonian kingdom lasted till B. C. 538; its successor, till B. C. 333; the third including the parts into which it was divided till 30 B. C., when the Roman empire was fully established, which was separated into the Eastern and Western empires in the fourth century of our era. "Mingle themselves with the seed of men," probably refers to the irruption of the barbarians and their influence on the Roman government.

Explanatory Questions.

THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD.

1. What troubled the king the morning after he had the dream?
2. Whom did he call together, and what two things demand of them?
3. What was their answer? What order did the king then give?
4. Was Daniel included? What course did he pursue? With what success?
5. What was the purpose of Nebuchadnezzar's dream? What was the dream?
6. Why, in verse 36, did Daniel say "*we?*" Whom did he credit with imparting to them the dream and its meaning? Verses 19-23, 27, 28.
7. What did the various parts of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw represent?
8. What were these four kingdoms? What appropriateness in the different metals used to represent them?
9. Tell something about the origin, extent, character, and continuance of these kingdoms?
10. What peculiarities of the fourth kingdom are here spoken of?

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

11. What other kingdom was predicted? How was it represented in the dream?
12. When and by whom was it to be set up? What were its peculiarities?
13. Who is represented in the Old Testament as king in this kingdom? Compare Ps. ii. 2, 6, 7; Is. ix. 6, 7.
14. What did John the Baptist preach, and what is said of his mission? Matt. iii. 2, 3.
15. What did Jesus preach and bid the twelve to preach? Matt. iv. 17; x. 7.
16. What name is given, and to whom, in Rev. xvii. 14, and xix. 16?
17. In what capacity did Jesus enter Jerusalem on "Palm Sunday?" John xii. 12-19.
18. What was his testimony a day or two later? John xii 31, 32.
19. What was his testimony to Pilate? John xviii. 37.
20. What empire of the world was ruling when Jesus was born and lived on earth?
21. What is the second petition in the Lord's Prayer?
22. To what extent has this kingdom come since our Lord's appearance on earth?
23. What can we do to advance this kingdom?

HYMN. L. M.

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His name with grateful song;
And with united hearts proclaim
That grace and truth by Jesus came.

Blessings abound where'er He reigns:
The prisoner leaps to loose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.

Where He displays His healing power,
The sting of death is known no more:
In Him the sons of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.

2d Quarter. **AUGSBURG LESSON LEAF.** *May 26, 1878.*

Lesson XXI. **International Bible Lessons.** DANIEL iii. 21-27

THE FIERY FURNACE.

21. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

23. And these three men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

26. ¶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

27. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

CENTRAL TEXT.—Verses 24 and 25. Commit to memory.

LESSON TAUGHT.—"The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Prov. xxix. 25.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace." Dan. iii. 17.

SCRIPTURE READINGS.

M. Daniel iii.
T. Ps. cxv.; Ex. xx. 4, 5.
W. Acts iv. 13-31.
Th. 1 Pet. iv. 12-19.
F. 2 Cor. iv. 7-18.
Sat. Matt. x. 16-35.
S. Ps. cxxv.

BRIEF NOTES.—The time of these occurrences was about sixteen years after those of last lesson. "Coats," "hosen" and "hats" represent parts of their dress, but not such as those words now would mean. The men were bound in their ordinary dress, whatever it was. "The burning fiery furnace" may have been used for smelting iron or burning brick, or the like. Its having an opening at the top and one below may be *illustrated* by a lime-kiln. "Bound" with chains. "Astonied"—an old form for *astonished*. "The Son of God"—so we understand this fourth person to have been; but "a son of the gods" would better represent Nebuchadnezzar's words and idea. The image Nebuchadnezzar made is supposed to have represented his favorite God Bel-Merodach.

Explanatory Questions.

CAST DOWN.

1. What great dedication was going on in the province of Babylon?
2. What did the image represent? Who were specially called to the dedication? And what seems to have been the object of the whole occasion?
3. What was reported to the king about Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego?
4. Was this true? Relate the interview that followed between them and the king.
5. What orders did Nebuchadnezzar then give, and in what spirit?
6. How were the three Hebrews taken, and what was done with them?
7. What happened to those that threw them in? To those thrown in? Verse 23.
8. Was burning to death a common punishment? Has it ever been used in later days and countries? What have you to say of it?
9. What have you to say of these three Hebrews, that they were steadfast in facing such an ordeal, for sake of truth and their convictions?
10. With what others in the course of history will you compare them?

BUT NOT DESTROYED.

11. Tell something of the probable general construction of the fiery furnace.
12. What now came upon Nebuchadnezzar, and why?
13. What did he do and say? What did he say he saw?
14. What did he say of the appearance of the fourth person? Explain.
15. Who was this fourth person? What is said in Is. xliii. 2?
16. What did the king then bid these three men do; and what did he call them?
17. When they came out, what was observed about them? Who were witnesses of these things?
18. What would, thus, likely be the result of Nebuchadnezzar's attempt to destroy God's servants?
19. What is said in Ps. lxxvi. 10? In Ps. lxii. 8? In Heb. xiii. 5, 6?
20. Does God always miraculously deliver his servants from persecution and harm?
21. What does he do? Ps. lv. 22, and 2 Cor. xii. 9.
22. In what are Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego examples to us?

HYMN. H. M.

To God I lift mine eyes,
From Him is all mine aid;
The God who built the skies,
And earth's foundations laid.
God is the tower
To which I fly:
His grace is nigh
In every hour.

My feet shall never slide
Or fall in fatal snares;
Since God, my guard and guide,
Defends me from my fears.
Those wakeful eyes,
That never sleep,
His children keep
When dangers rise.

No burning heats by day,
Nor blasts of evening air,
Shall take my health away,
If God be with me there.
Thou art my sun,
And Thou my shade,
To guide my head
By night or noon.

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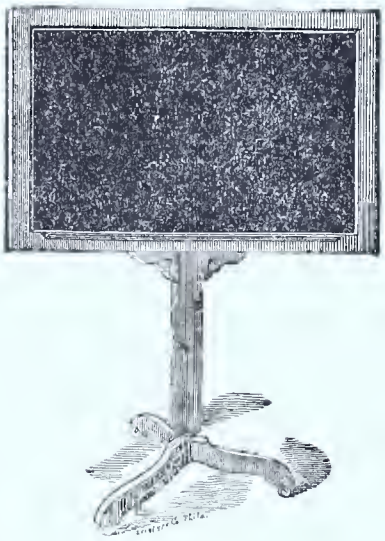

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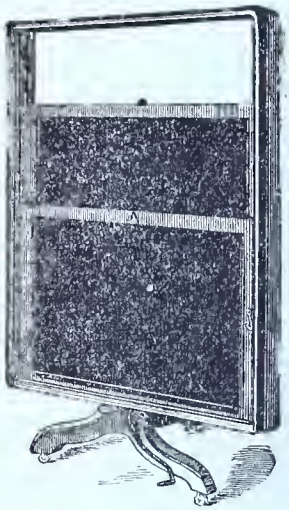

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